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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1005

April 10, 2002

COMMITTEES:
ARMED SERVICES
COMMERCE
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SMALL BUSINESS

The Honorable Michael K. Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Room 8A201
Washington, DC 20554

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JUN 18 2002

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Dear Chairman Powell:

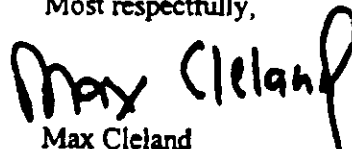
In Georgia, one out of every four homes is served by direct broadcast satellite (DBS) service. DBS has proved to be an effective competitor to cable providers in the multi-channel video marketplace.

These companies are also among the fiercest competitors in offering broadband services along with DSL service. As you know, much of my state is rural and does not currently have an option for receiving affordable, high speed Internet service. The proponents of the EchoStar-DirecTV merger state that the combined company will be able to deliver high speed service to the entire country at a nationwide rate. As you know, high speed service is not a luxury, but it is becoming necessary to deliver business and educational material. As you review this merger at the FCC, I hope you will review the opportunity this presents for ensuring that more Americans, especially those in rural and traditionally underserved areas, have access to high speed Internet service.

Additionally, the role of the local broadcaster is an important one in our society. Local broadcasters deliver the news that their audience want to know and, in many cases, need to know for emergency purposes. Ensuring that local stations will be available to citizens via whatever means of multi-channel provider they choose is demonstrably in the public interest. Currently, Georgia DBS customers in only two designated market areas in the entire state are able to receive their local channels. EchoStar and DirecTV have stated the combined company would be able to carry local television programming in all 210 markets. I hope you will evaluate this claim as you review the merger.

Thank you for your service to this country, and your attention to these important policy matters.

Most respectfully,



Max Cleland
United States Senator

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